



ursula von rydingsvard

Lecture

September 21, 2014 / 2:00 pm

East Building Atrium

National Gallery of Art

The artist, née Ursula Karolyszyn, was born in 1942 in Deensen, a small town in the Lower Saxony region of Germany. Her father, Ignacy, was a Polish-speaking Ukrainian conscripted by the Nazis in 1941 to move from Poland to a farm in Deensen, where he was forced to work the land during World War II. The family remained there until the end of the war, and then moved through nine camps for displaced persons in five years. After immigrating to the United States at age eight under the auspices of the United States' Marshall Plan (European Recovery Program, 1948–1952) and the Catholic Church, von Rydingsvard and her family carved out a new life for themselves. Ursula attended Columbia University, where she received her Master of Fine Arts degree in 1975. She emerged from her studies focused on the cedar 4 × 4 beams that would define her sculptural practice.

Although her work is abstract, the artist has acknowledged a strong correlation to the human figure. This link is most visible in her vertically oriented conical works, exemplified by *Five Cones* (1990–1992), which was donated to the National Gallery of Art by Sherry and Joel Mallin. The gridlike format and the organic flow of von Rydingsvard's materials give *Five Cones* its structural and visual tensions. It is this compromise formation—the artist's physical aggression toward her material together with the considerable refinement of form—that gives strength to von Rydingsvard's work. In spring 2014 the artist received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the International Sculpture Center.

This lecture is free and open to the public. Seating is available on a first-come, first-seated basis. The East Building of the National Gallery of Art is located at Fourth Street and Pennsylvania Avenue NW.



National Gallery of Art

Sixth Street and Constitution Avenue NW Washington, DC

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Ursula von Rydingsvard, *Five Cones*, 1990–1992,
cedar and graphite, National Gallery of Art,
Washington, Gift of Sherry and Joel Mallin

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